



# THE CARILLON

Monthly Newsletter  
September 2020

First Presbyterian Church  
Rev. Dudley Elvery, Transitional Pastor  
Vol. 55 No. 7  
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## TRUSTEE REPORT

Most of us have not been in nor around our church buildings for several months now, but a few Trustees do work diligently inside and outside to keep the buildings in the best of condition. Outside, Marge Errant has been weeding and trimming bushes across the front of the buildings. Paul Gerrish and Laura Dillman have been weeding in the Aki Garden. [Did you see the tiny insert last month that our church has yet again won a Homewood Beautification Award?] Laura also has been taking many photos of the Aki Garden, some of which highlight this article.



For a complete “tour” of the garden with the rest of Laura’s photos, try this link. <https://youtu.be/4C0DQOQQ2qs> If the link does not work from this newsletter, please go to the web site and choose worship service for August 23 and then play the Prelude. It is a wonderful “tour.” [[www.fpchw.org](http://www.fpchw.org)]

As some may know already, the air conditioning in the sanctuary is not working. We have had an initial diagnostic call followed by a more detained service call.

There is a leak in the system that has to be located and repaired, and this service has been scheduled.

The parking lot light timer for the C.E. building had to be replaced. Someone has dumped two tires in the parking lot near the shed. These will have to be properly disposed of. Johnnie Dorsey has been weeding the north and east edges of the parking lot. Paul and Laura have been organizing the gardening supplies in the shed (garage).



The church had an abnormally high water bill for the previous month—over ten times our typical monthly usage. A detailed billing report has been requested from the Water Department, and we are monitoring our meter.

Jim Foster



## COMMUNION SCHEDULE

During the virtual worship service on Sunday, September 6, Pastor Dudley will lead us in a celebration of the sacrament of Communion.

Remember to have a glass of juice and a piece of bread ready before starting the service on your phone, tablet, or computer.



## A SERVICE OF HEALING AND WHOLENESS



On Monday, September 7, at 7 p.m. we again present on our web site a virtual service of *Healing and Wholeness* as we did on July 6. Please access this September service from our web site [fpchw.org](http://fpchw.org) and use a pull-down under "Worship." Our increasing awareness of how broken our world has become

can either overwhelm us and push us into apathy or even despair or move us to say "enough is enough" and realign ourselves with God's dreams and possibilities for a Kingdom on Earth. This service can become a small step in that direction by helping us to experience anew God's healing, peace-giving grace or by refueling us for becoming agents of healing and reconciliation or both. Taking time for this mimics a pattern for Jesus and his disciples. They would be out in the thick of a clamoring multitude and then retreat to a quiet place to reconnect, recharge, and clarify their mission. Our quiet place awaits us in this service.

*Dudley Elvery*

## SESSION REPORT

### Regular Session Meeting, August 17, 2020

Let's begin with a bit of history. Four years ago, interested members of our congregation met on several Sunday afternoons with representatives from all four other area Presbyterian churches, led by Rev. Jan Edmiston from Presbytery of Chicago, to discuss our visions individually and collectively for our futures. At that time, all five churches were interested in following only our own paths, and little came from the discussions as efforts to develop joint efforts and enterprises faded away. Since then, one church—Lansing Presbyterian Church—has closed its doors permanently. Our church now has an interim pastor and is seeking a called pastor, and another church is anticipating the loss of their pulpit supply pastor before the end of the year. Our Session has been asked to participate in a Presbytery-led discussion of sharing pastoral services that we can both afford to support. Session voted to participate in the discussion on Zoom.

Rev. Elvery has signed a new Interim Pastor Covenant with First Presbyterian Church (his third) for up to one year beginning July 16, 2020, through July 15, 2021.

Rev. Elvery thanked Rev. Jane Tuma for her pulpit supply in the virtual worship services on Sundays, August 16, 23, and 30, while he is on approved unpaid leave for three weeks (August 10-31, 2020), hopefully completing the sale of his big house.

As mentioned last month, the family of former Active Member Donald Niefert spread his remains into the soil of the Aki Garden. Rev. Elvery was present to offer an appropriate spiritual response and dedication.

Presbytery of Chicago is leading two Zoom conferences. One on Wednesday, August 26, 2020, to discuss strategies for reopening small churches for worship. The second on Sunday, August 30, 2020, to discuss common issues faced by congregations that are seeking to call a pastor. We hope to receive useful information.

Ruling Elders Karen Maurer, Laurie Ulrich, and Kathie Hazlett along with Rev. Elvery met on a Zoom conference call to discuss the challenging question of how we will continue to fulfill our baptismal promises to support and nurture the eight young children currently participating in Young Children's Sunday School. A plan of action has been developed, and Session voted to approve the continuing work of this group.

Each week the technical skills of our volunteers and staff continue to improve. There is so much to learn from the existing software we own for improving the content and appearance of the documents and images they put on the church website. A special survey may be coming to determine which features our members like and dislike, which will help focus efforts on those the members of the congregation find most meaningful. Watch for it, and participate.

Respectfully submitted,  
Edward C. Wahl, Clerk of Session



## FROM THE PASTOR

I remember first encountering Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in undergraduate school. The haunting emptiness comes back anytime I revisit it. I can see it as the story of a congregation waiting for the perfect new pastor.

The function of pastors who intentionally serve between the tenure of a pastor who's left and one yet to come has been traditionally to bridge the gap, to hold things

together until the new pastor arrives. The assumption is that the congregation functions the same way year after year, and all that is needed is to keep things running until the new pastor arrives to take charge.

Today, congregations that thrive also adapt and shed programs and, more importantly, attitudes that no longer are life-giving. Interim Pastors more and more are called “Transitional Pastors” because they work with the congregation as it transitions into more vital and relevant ways of thinking and doing. By so, they can find a new pastor to move with them into God’s new, comforting, and unsettling future for them.



The Pandemic and all the upsetting of old patterns and demanding different ways of doing ministry highlights the need to be transitional instead of

interim, both for pastors and congregations. When I look at what we are doing at First Presbyterian Church of Homewood, I see adaptation bubbling up here and there. I see experimentation with different ways of doing and being church. In the midst of grieving that which has necessarily been set aside, I see bright rays of hope of what God can and is doing within and through this congregation. There’s no waiting for Godot here; there’s no filling of empty time. Instead, we celebrate God’s continuing presence in our lives day after day and tomorrow after tomorrow.

*Dudley Elvery*

### PASTORAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE

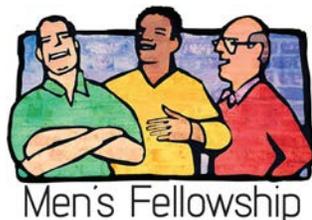
The Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) continues the work of considering applicants for our next Called Pastor. There is not much that can be reported except that we are asking questions, listening to candidates’ sermons, reading resumes, inquiring of their interest in our pulpit. You may have forgotten by now who the PNC is, so: Laurie Ulrich, Joyce Anders, Jan Bunker, Emily Hanley, Tricia Hentschel, Bob James, Jay Ruklic.

Laurie Ulrich

### CHICAGO HEIGHTS FELLOWSHIP

Some of the men of our church rejoined the Chicago Heights First Presby Men’s Fellowship that met on Friday, August 21. They were at Paulie’s Pub, 2736 Chicago Road, South Chicago Hts., this time with

**outside seating!** For September, they plan to gather at Paulie’s Pub at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, September 18. All are welcome.



### REBECCA CIRCLE

Rebecca Circle will soon do a Zoom meeting to pick a different evening or a different time for resuming our study of C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*. Tim’s class is on our Wednesday night. Hope to see all of you soon on my screen.

Laura Dillman

#### **Laura Dillman**

It’s been an interesting summer. Paul Gerrish and I have been working in the Aki Garden weeding and enjoying the sights and sounds of Nature at its best. I was able to get photos of 2 beautiful butterflies! I was amazed that God sent me a sign that gave me such peace and joy. I have really gotten the “taking-pictures bug,” enjoy each and every minute of it. If you have Facebook, feel free to view them.

Paul and I were able to go to the dunes area and enjoy the beauty of Lake Michigan in Indiana. We couldn’t get over how beautiful it is. The sights and sounds were simply breath-taking. We saw a mama duck and her ducklings, even took a video. Then while looking for another place, we found Friendship Botanical Gardens in Michigan City. The flowers and gardens were a sight to behold—spectacular place.

I’ve been trying to keep in touch with our church family, but not as much as I could. Paul and I had an unexpected treat and were able to have dinner at Wiley’s Grill with Vern Moore of our church family. The food was great, and the fellowship was even better. I’ve been enjoying the Zoom class with Tim VanNasdale as well as the Panera Bible Study class. Both are so amazing. I enjoy seeing faces of everyone. I’ve been enjoying our worship service online very much and hope for it to go to Zoom in order to see more faces.

Sending you love, hugs, prayers, and blessings for a fantastic month ahead. Here’s hoping that we can all be together again soon in the church building when it’s safe to do so. Stay safe and healthy.

### STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE MINISTRY TEAM

The Stewardship and Finance Ministry Team did not meet in August because of the lack of pressing business. Items we know are coming include the PPP loan forgiveness application, creation and implementation of an on-line offering system, renewed emphasis on estate planning that includes the church in bequests, requesting missing Per Capita contributions, recovering from slowed pledge giving, and preparing for the repair costs for the air conditioning unit above the sanctuary.



**Karen Maurer**

As I watched the Democratic National Convention this week, I became aware that, unlike many commentators, I did not mind—in fact appreciated—it’s being online, much like FPC’s weekly worship services in the past six months. Continuing along that line of connections, I heard many speakers—either by their identity or by their messages—speak of inclusion and inclusiveness, of kindness, of compassion, not because they were preaching a religious message but out of basic respect and care for fellow humans. For me, what I was hearing was grounded in / connected to my life of being in / growing in / the body of Christ. It was not a new awareness. My enlarging understanding of what it means to be created in the image of God has formed and informed an openness to diversity of all kinds. Understanding God as Creator underlay my inclusion of children in Fourth Presbyterian’s annual Arts Festival: we are creative because that is part of God’s image. I look forward to watching the Republican National Convention next.

I very much appreciate the inclusion of pandemic observations in the summer *Carillons* and hope they will continue. Thank you, Jan Wahl



**VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICES**



Kathie Hazlett, with great help from Kathie Darman and Laurie Ulrich, will continue to edit and post online worship services during

the month of September on the church website **fpchw.org** under the heading of **Worship**. Join the service at 10:30 a.m. each Sunday in order to worship “together” or at any other time. Right now we have virtual church, much like the words of a song by Ken Medema, who wrote “Come Build a Church.”

Come build a church with soul and spirit;

Come build a church of flesh and bone.

**We need no tower rising skyward;**

**No house of wood, or glass, or stone.**

Come build a church with human frailty;

Come build a church of flesh and blood.

Jesus shall be its sure foundation.

It shall be built by the hand of God.

Here is a final verse of Ken Medema’s song that is appropriate for all of us now. This song will no longer be included as a reminder of the complete meaning of virtual church. Considering the spacing, I will place the verse on the next page!



Let us see the tongues of fire.  
 Let us hear the great wind roar.  
 Let us know the awe and wonder,  
 That we've only glimpsed before.  
 Let us feel the strength of passion,  
 Which can make us laugh and weep.  
 Let us know this great awakening,  
 For so long we've been asleep.

 **FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY**



One of the things we're missing during the pandemic is in-person Sunday School for children, which is not to say children have been forgotten. After all, every member of First Presbyterian of Homewood promised in Baptismal

liturgies to support and nurture the faith formation of those being baptized. Pastor Dudley (and Pastor Jane Tuma) spend time preparing a "Moment for Children" for each week's virtual worship.

An ad hoc committee (Karen Maurer, Laurie Ulrich, Kathie Hazlett, and Pastor Dudley) met in July on Zoom to ponder the question: What is next for children's faith formation at our church? It was an exciting conversation!

Starting the week of Labor Day, Pastor Dudley will meet our children—and maybe a visitor or two—for a conversation on Zoom. He's been missing the interactive piece that happens on the chancel steps when we are in our building, and this is as close as we can come right now. The Zoom talk will be recorded and, thanks to Web Master Kathie Hazlett's tech skills, become part of the Sunday virtual service as a *moment with children*.

The older children all have a copy of the story Bible (a gift from you to them) that Pastor will be using in the conversations. Parents have agreed to support at-home activities when those are part of the story. Will you help with this creative project? Tell one of the ad hoc folks. Thanks! Karen Maurer

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT ZOOM CLASS WITH TIM**



*Cold Case Christianity* by J. Warner Wallace is in full swing with Tim VanNasdale on Wednesdays, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. on Zoom. To join, email Tim at [tlvannasdale@gmail.com](mailto:tlvannasdale@gmail.com) so that he can send you the Zoom link.

There is no class on September 2 due to a conflict with Session. All will assemble again on September 9.

So far, the detective has been giving "tools" that police use to find the truth, tools that can be applied to the Bible. These tools include: dropping pre-conceived notions, listening to witnesses—every word and every missing word, finding supporting witnesses, separating artifacts from evidence, resisting conspiracy theories, and being prepared for articulate but not true attacks. The court room uses the term "beyond a reasonable doubt." When testing the Gospels for reliability—with the tools—one will find doubts, uncomfortable answers, and questions that can't be answered. The future lessons will focus on testing the Gospels. The detective will help you trust what you can confirm and therefore trust the Bible on what you can't. Come be a cold case detective. Jan Wahl

**Back to School – Janet Wahl**

Another photo-essay:  
 My niece Janet is ready to teach math at a middle school in Memphis, Tennessee. She has a mask, a face shield, and disinfectant wipes. Where did she find those wipes?



Our grandsons, Christopher and Carson, are ready for middle school in Hendersonville, Tennessee. Grand-daughter Sierra has online classes from Univ of Tenn, Chattanooga in Chattanooga. She has already had to quarantine for 14 days from contact with an ill person.



Great-niece Elizabeth has online classes at home from Savannah College of Art and Design. Great-niece Alex is on campus at Yale, but had to quarantine for 14 days because she came from TN. The swim team isn't competing.

 **PRAYER CARDS**

The following members, friends, and staff of First Presbyterian Church of Homewood will receive a card telling them that the church is praying for them. Please pray for those listed. Kathie Darman

**Week of September 6**

Patty Dunlap  
Rod Dunlap  
Rev Dudley & Glenna Elvery  
Marge Errant  
Mae Evert

**Week of September 13**

Barbara Foerch  
Jim Foster  
Paul Gerrish  
Ray & Gerri Gilmore  
Fred Grable & Nancy Connors

**Week of September 20**

Ramses Godoy & Sebastian  
Dottie Guenter  
Emily Hamilton  
Kim & Tim Hamilton  
Dan & Rev Laurel Hamilton

**Week of September 27**

Dan & Kiley Hamilton  
Melanie Hamilton  
Nick & Bree Hamilton  
Olivia Hamilton  
Emily & Richard Hanley

 **HOSPITALIZED**

In the hospital during the past month were Charlene Hansen, Kathie Darman, and Evelyn Dixon.



 **NURSING HOMES / REHAB**

Mae Evert, Lemont Center Rehab; Pat Steiner, Plymouth Place, LaGrange Park; Marilyn Perdue, Clarendale of Mokena.

 **SYMPATHY**

Church sympathy is extended to the family of Kathie Darman on the death of her sister Pauline.



*I am the Resurrection and the Life saith the Lord: he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*

 **GIFTS AND MEMORIALS**

The following have been recorded in the Memorial Book in the Narthex: Capt. Jack Day and Larry Leonard.



**Laurie Ulrich**

It's been interesting to answer this question, that seems to be put to me frequently these days: "How are you doing?"

Of course, in the main, the answer remains, "Just fine!" meaning I'm not sick; no one in my family is sick; I have enough to eat; I have a roof over my head; I have sufficient masks, hand-sanitizer, toilet paper; and I have relatively dependable phone and internet service. We decided months ago to err, if it is an error, on the side of caution and have no intention of being "out in the world" at this point or any time in the foreseeable future.

But, in truth, my being "Fine!" is so much more than that! I also have "discovered" the time to be in touch with people I miss, but cannot see. I've spent hours writing emails in these past five months—some to people I've been lax in contacting for too long, some whom I would be talking to regularly if it weren't for Covid 19. I get to talk to my daughters, via Marco Polo, every single day, multiple times! (I'm sure those of you who have adult children understand why I count that as an unexpected and wonderful outcome of this pandemic.)

And I have time to spend reading and contemplating and praying, time that eludes me when I'm living my previously normal life. These practices bring me joy, but I deny them to myself when I'm committed to doing things, going places, getting jobs done. (And, quite obviously to me, it is detrimental to my spiritual well-being to deny myself time for contemplation and prayer!)

And—though Zoom isn't my favorite way to be in touch—it's become a life-line in some ways. Seeing the Pamera Bible Study group on-line every Tuesday, and the Christian Apologetics class on-line every Wednesday, and working with so many congregational members to get Sunday worship services on-line each week, and meeting with the PNC on-line—all of these are reminders to me that everyone's still there! And the Spirit still ties us together. And our God is still our God. And our faith-family is still that.

Like everyone else, I have no idea how and when this pandemic situation will actually settle into a sustainable set of practices. That seems a long way off, with so many unknowns still in the picture. But in spite of that, I feel quite honest in answering the "How are you doing?" question with, "Just fine!"

## BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

### September

4 Susan Zorns  
5 Craig Miller  
8 Michael Bonthron  
11 Melanie Hamilton  
16 Bob James

### September

19 Kristen Maxwell  
22 Tom Hentschel  
23 Marilyn Austin  
25 Heather Miller  
30 Mary Cantway



May God grant birthday blessings  
to you  
all this coming year.

### Kathie Hazlett's Backyard Visitors:



### Interview of an African-American Mom Kathleen G. O'Hanlon

*Zena Smith is a professional African American woman who credits God for her rise from childhood poverty to her education at a private HBCU to her resounding success, first as an accounting professional and now as the Founder/CEO of MASTERS Plus Tutoring and Test Prep Program. She and her family lived in Flossmoor for more than 30 years and recently relocated to the Atlanta area. Zena and her husband Greg have three children, one granddaughter with another due in December, and a German Shepherd granddog. (Interview questions were asked and answered in writing.)*

### **Q. Typically, how does an African American feel about the idea of an encounter with the police?**

A. African Americans have endured brutality at the hands of the police since slavery. Police departments have a 400-year history of racists and brutal acts of violence against black Americans. The latest economic data show that African Americans are more likely to be worried about being victims of police deadly force than about being victims of a violent crime! Just let that marinate for a second: more afraid of a deadly encounter with the police—those sworn to protect and

serve—than of other acts of violence. So, how do we feel about a possible encounter with the police? That is difficult to answer concisely, but I'll do my best.

We feel helpless—just utterly helpless! Angry, frustrated, fatigued, scared...I could go on. Personally, I am weary of living in the constant state of anxiety and fear for myself, my husband, my son, my daughters, my brothers—essentially *every* African American I know and love. I'm sick and tired of a society telling me every day that my life does not matter. Consider that the role of the police is to serve and protect the community, but for centuries African Americans have known that this does not include us; hence the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. Through the BLM movement we have tried to share the duality of our relationship with the police. On one hand, we understand there is a need for public safety, but after thousands of deadly encounters with the police, we understand the public they reference does not include African Americans. So, what happens when we have an encounter with the police? We have to do what every African American since slavery has done, and that is to govern yourself (if possible) in a manner that will allow you to get home safely and alive with the full understanding that it is also very likely than no matter what you do (think George Floyd), you still might not survive.

I've heard other ethnicities say things such as "Well, they must have deserved it; they shouldn't resist arrest; they shouldn't run," etc. But all of these thoughtless statements fail to understand that, honestly, we don't have to be doing any of those things to experience a deadly encounter with the police. As you have seen via camera footage in the last couple of years, we cannot jog, play outside, swim, sleep in our beds, or purchase Skittles or cigarettes—all normal, everyday activities enjoyed by white Americans—without being targeted and killed by the police. Reflect upon the senseless killings of Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, and Sandra Bland, and perhaps the images of the first brutal police killing captured on film, photos of Emmett Till.

Many have called for better training and body cameras as effective measures to better protect us. But, in our eyes, we know the police know how to make peaceful arrests simply by seeing the treatment of white offenders. Reflect back to the capture of Dylan Roof. That young man slaughtered a church full of African American worshippers, and the police, upon his capture, took him to Burger King for dinner! So, we know the police have received the proper training; they simply don't value the lives of African Americans, and that is why we fear *any* encounter with the police, no matter how be-

nign the situation might appear. White Americans have no idea what it's like to be overly policed and horribly mistreated by the police. Why? Because white people are treated like human beings, like individuals with rights. Even if a white person breaks the law, he knows and can expect he will not be abused or killed.

I pray for my family and myself *every* single day, imploring God to place a hedge of protection around us. And I don't have a single friend or associate of color who doesn't do the exact same thing.

**Q. What do white parents in America need to understand about being a black parent in this country?**

I've heard this question several times before, and it always befuddles me. I feel like "Why do I have to have a different expectation as a black parent than you do as a white parent?" Just like parents of any ethnicity, we want our children to be safe from harm, to receive a good education, to go outside to live/work/play and make it back home alive at night, to grow up, to marry, to buy homes where they can live safely without fear of being shot... simply put, to have the same opportunity to enjoy the beauty and richness that America has to offer as white kids do.

But, sadly, that is not our reality. Instead, black parents have for centuries been given the arduous, heart-sinking task of having "the talk" with their children. The same talk my parents received, the same talk I received, and the same talk I had to give my own children. Imagine having to endure the pain of saying to your child, as he heads out the door off to school or work, "Honey, if the police stop you, you must follow these steps so you can survive and get home safely:

- ✚ If driving, put your hands on the dashboard.
- ✚ Turn on the interior light, but move very slowly.
- ✚ Don't make any sudden movements because they might interpret this as you pulling a gun.
- ✚ Take note of the officer's body camera, and make sure the red light indicates if it's on.
- ✚ Ask a passerby to record your encounter.
- ✚ If you are walking, don't put your hands in your pockets.
- ✚ Raise you hands above your head so police can see them clearly.
- ✚ Don't ask a lot of questions. Give short, concise answers to all questions.
- ✚ Carry some form of ID."

I mean, think about *that!* Is *that* what you desire for your children?

And then, there is the school-to-prison pipeline, policies that are used against our children from supposed educators who work in our educational system. I'm certainly not suggesting that all educators are this way, but some recent studies have confirmed what African American parents have known for years—that black children are 75 percent more likely to be suspended or expelled from school for violations that white children typically don't even receive a verbal warning for. African American children subjected to excessive punishments and excessive suspensions lose significant classroom time, resulting in the loss of academic ground. As this is compounded over the years, recent studies show that our children have a higher risk of landing in jail; hence, the term "school-to-prison pipeline." Did you know that, in the United States, African Americans represent 80 percent of the prison population but only 13 percent of the overall population? These are concerns that most white parents simply do not have to worry or stress over.

In short, what we really want white parents to understand is actually quite simple: we don't want the color of our skin to prevent us from having the same things they have and take for granted as citizens of this country. We have the same hopes, desires, and dreams as white parents!

**Q. What do people who are *not* black need to understand about the brutality and killings we have seen throughout our history and especially in the recent police killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and so many other African Americans?**

I guess I counter this with, "Why in the world do we live in a country where these types of brutal killings are acceptable for *any* human being?" As I stated previously, the police have been killing and over-policing African Americans since slavery. The recent murders captured on video are not one-offs. They happen with regularity, and the African American community has been living with that for decades. This country seems to think of it as a recent issue, not understanding that recent injustices are steeped in a 400-year legacy of injustice. We've known and understood the interconnections of the KKK and other hate groups with local police departments. So, this is not a new problem for African Americans; it's just that the advent of cellphones and hi-tech cameras has forced these brutal, senseless killings directly into the living rooms of white America. You can no longer hide, turn your head and pretend not to see it. The trust between the police and the judicial system is broken, and perhaps permanently broken.

I think the brazen killing of George Floyd was a wake-up call for white America. It was the first time since

Reconstruction and Jim Crow that white America saw a public lynching. It was so casual, so callous, so heart-breaking, so unprovoked—the way the cop casually placed his hand in his pocket, his knee on George’s neck, and listened to him scream and cry for his mother. What human mother did not feel her heart sink watching that murder? So, his murder was a wake-up call for all Americans as to what African Americans have been experiencing out here at the hands of the police and the justice system. Following the murder of George Floyd, there has been a huge increase in the number of white Americans joining our peaceful protests and standing by our sides to bring awareness and an end to these racist policies. And we are making some gains, as we see with the recent passing of Breonn’s Law (prohibiting no-knock warrants) in Louisville and San Francisco’s recent CAREN law that makes it illegal for white people to unjustifiably call the police on African Americans, thus weaponizing the police against them.

And, of course, I would be remiss if I did not implore white America to take a deep, thoughtful, and critical look at the policies of our current White House administration. Not since the Jim Crow era have we seen a president stoking white fears and anxiety with such callous and racist policies, language, and agenda. If you care about this issue and you want to make a difference, start by saving our country from a man who is arguably one of the most openly racist presidents in modern times

**Q. What do you believe we are called to do as Christians in response to law enforcement’s brutalizing and killing black Americans and in response to America’s systemic racism?**

To be honest, I believe white Americans already *know* about the black struggle and our collective experiences in America. Unless your head is stuck in the sand and you never turn on your TV or radio, our plight in this country is on display every single day. So, to me, it is more about whether white people want to acknowledge it and—more importantly—about what they want to do about it.

The word *Christian* in the question is indicative of a hypothetical conversation that so many African Americans do not understand. When I hear a *Christian* ask, “What should we do?” I can’t help but wonder if you are reading your Bible. Christ clearly calls for us who follow *him* to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. It’s quite simple. So, if you just start with that command—right there—you can make a huge difference in this world. For those Christians who would like concrete

recommendations as to potential congregational responses, perhaps these will help:

- ✚ Love your neighbor as called by Christ and teach your children to judge a man by the content of his character, not by the color of his skin.
- ✚ Host Congressional workshops and invite experts to speak on systemic racism (what does it look like?) and find ways to fight it in your community.
- ✚ Adopt a local low-income minority public school and have the congregation volunteer to tutor and provide needed school supplies.
- ✚ Learn about the educational policies around school discipline at your local schools and become a voice for change.
- ✚ Read books together on white privilege and police brutality and host congregational discussions. Invite speakers.
- ✚ Be a presence and a force for change at your local village and school board meetings.
- ✚ Push for law enforcement changes, like the Breonna and CAREN laws, to be adopted in your community.
- ✚ Stand side-by-side with the peaceful African American protesters in your community.
- ✚ Attend other churches beside your own to widen and deepen your connection to and understanding of your brown brothers and sisters.
- ✚ Watch documentaries and movies, such as “13<sup>th</sup>,” “When They See Us,” and “Just Mercy,” and hold meaningful conversations.

I really don’t think it should be the responsibility of African Americans to tell Christians how to be Christian—that is such a stange request. But I do truly appreciate that your congregation cares enough to ask the big tough questions and then dare to search for ways to effect change. So, I thank you for the opportunity to address your congregation to share just a snippet of our collective experiences, and I pray you all continue to be a force for change and speak truth to power!

 **OCTOBER CARILLON**

The deadline for having articles or information placed in the *October Carillon* will be **Sunday, September 20**. Please turn in all materials in writing and e-mail the Editor at [ewahl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ewahl@sbcglobal.net). Remember to keep on sharing joys and concerns about sheltering-in-place or about reopening or about virtual church or Tim’s class. The key word is *share*. Hearing about each other is good for the soul. The Editor thanks all the September reporters for their assistance.

J C =W=